January/February 1994 $2.00

MONTANA OUTDOORS

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January/February 1994
Volume 25, Number 1

LIKE MOST PEOPLE I sometimes reminisce about childhood. My love then was sports, especially basketball and the gym. I must admit I still admire the lined, high-gloss logic of a basketball court. There is beauty in a pebbled roundball and wonder in the squeak of rubber soles on polished wood. And there is a certain wordless grace in the meshing of five players into a team leading to the soft whoosh of a basketball's drop through a cotton net.

I grew up in northwestern Montana, surrounded by wild places where moose and rivers and old forests were parts of our community. Like well water and firewood, like day and night, like the smell of wood smoke on chilly winter evenings, and like our neighbors, the forest was always there. Basketball was a child's game and my focus.

While glancing through this issue of *Montana Outdoors*, however, I began to recognize a familiar calmness that has to do with feeling connected to a place, as most of us are in Montana. Because I now understand that wild things will not always endure, I promise you there is wonder in these beautiful and mesmerizing photos of creeks and mountains, fox and otter, black bear and butterflies, flickers and flowers.

Why do these images tend to soothe our souls? I was struck by how lucky we are to be living where we live, here in Montana where people still talk *to* each other, not *at* each other. Here in Montana, always close by, is the outdoors where, alone together, we can discover the natural world where so many—as the words within these pages attest—find refuge in the wild. And yet I was also struck by how we tend not to envision ourselves as working within the natural world community. We seem often separated from nature and the wild. Perhaps the uninterrupted passage of time there forces us to seek comfort in tidy notions of dominion. But the diversity of life in Montana can be a soothing thing. Like a very determined child in a gym, perhaps we should practice how to know the wild better.

The images and words within this annually celebrated issue of *Montana Outdoors* offer each of us a splendid opportunity to reflect on how we fit into these lovely pictures. And it's an opportunity not to be missed.

Sincerely,

Marc Racicot

MARC RACICOT
Governor

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Montana Outdoors (ISSN 0027-0016), the official publication of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, is published bimonthly (January, March, May, July, September, and November). Contributions (manuscripts or illustrations) are welcome with the understanding that the department or the editor cannot be responsible for loss or damage. All contributions will be published at the discretion of the editor. For subscription information, phone 800/678-6668 (toll-free). Subscription rates are $7 for one year, $12.50 for two years, and $17 for three years. (Please add $3 per year for Canadian subscriptions. All other foreign subscriptions, air mail only, are $22 for one year.) Individual copies and back issues cost $2 each. Although *Montana Outdoors* is copyrighted, permission to reprint articles is available by writing our office or phoning us at 406/444-2474. All correspondence should be addressed: *Montana Outdoors*, Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 East Sixth; Helena, MT 59601. ©Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1994. All rights reserved. Indexed by States' Periodical Index, 1660 Smithville Road; Havre, MT 59501.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *Montana Outdoors*, Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 East Sixth; Helena, MT 59601. Second-class postage paid at Helena, MT 59601, and additional mailing offices.

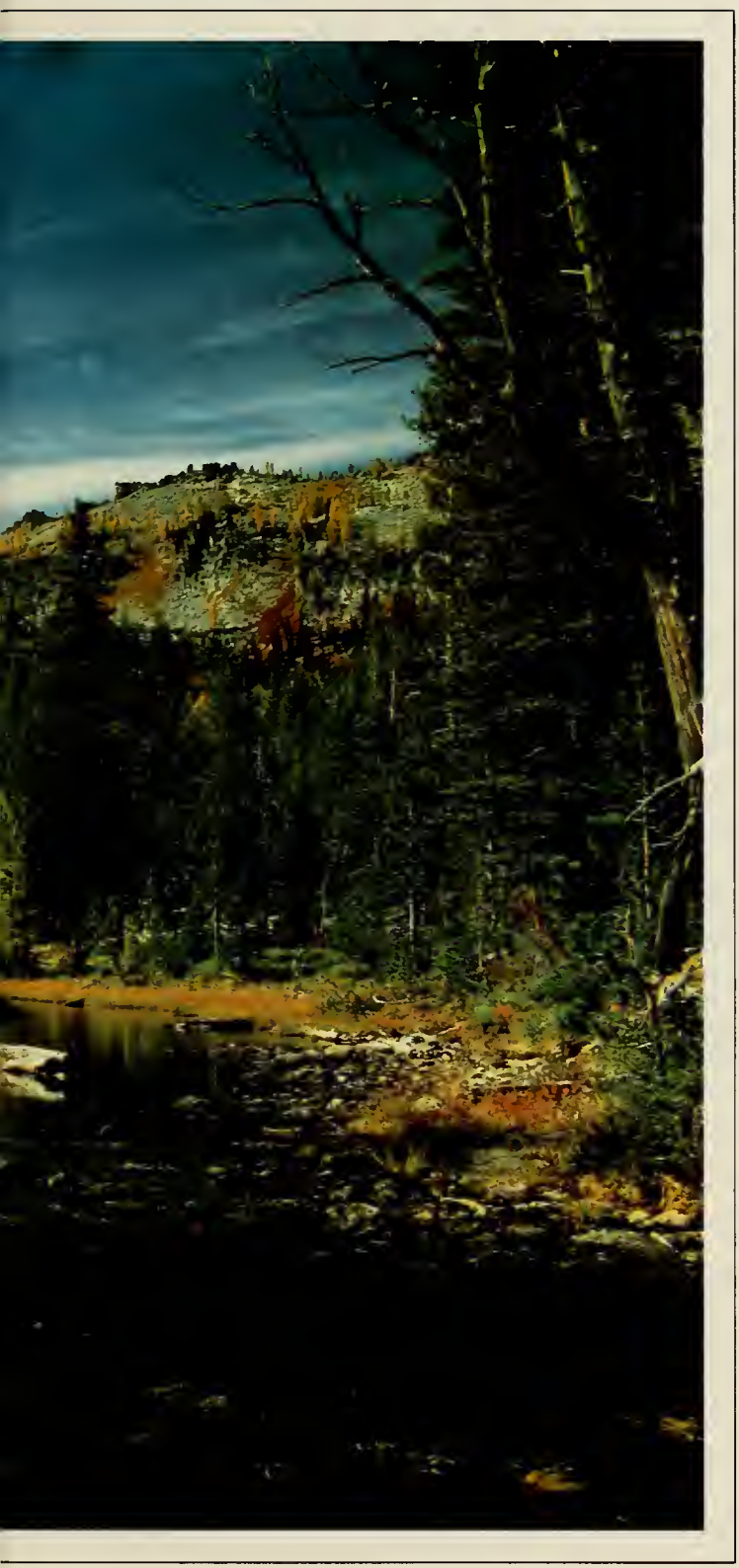
FRONT COVER
BIGHORN RAM
MICHAEL J. BARLOW

BACK COVER
GREAT BLUE HERON
JAN L. WASSINK

INSIDE FRONT COVER
GLACIER NATIONAL PARK
JOHN W. HERBST

Little Rock Creek, Bitterroot Mountains

MARK LAGERSTROM



I am in love with Montana. For other states I have admiration, respect, recognition, even some affection, but with Montana it is love, and it's difficult to analyze love when you're in it....It seems to me that Montana is a great splash of grandeur. The scale is huge but not overpowering. The land is rich with grass and color, and the mountains are the kind I would create if mountains were ever put on my agenda. **—John Steinbeck, Travels with Charley**

Space becomes personal in Montana, a possession, something held in the heart like a favorite view or remembered scene. There's enough space in the state, and few enough people; everyone might well have a favorite view all to themselves and never have to share it with another. The urgency of space is something that is shared, yet remains intensely personal. It's an intimate link with the landscape you carry with you when you live in Montana, or live away from it. It becomes a possession and like any possession that is precious and valuable, it is carefully guarded. **—Glenn Law, Montana Spaces**

MOUSING FOX

RICHARD MOUSEL

Beaver

MICHAEL J. BARLOW

River otter

JAN L. WASSINK

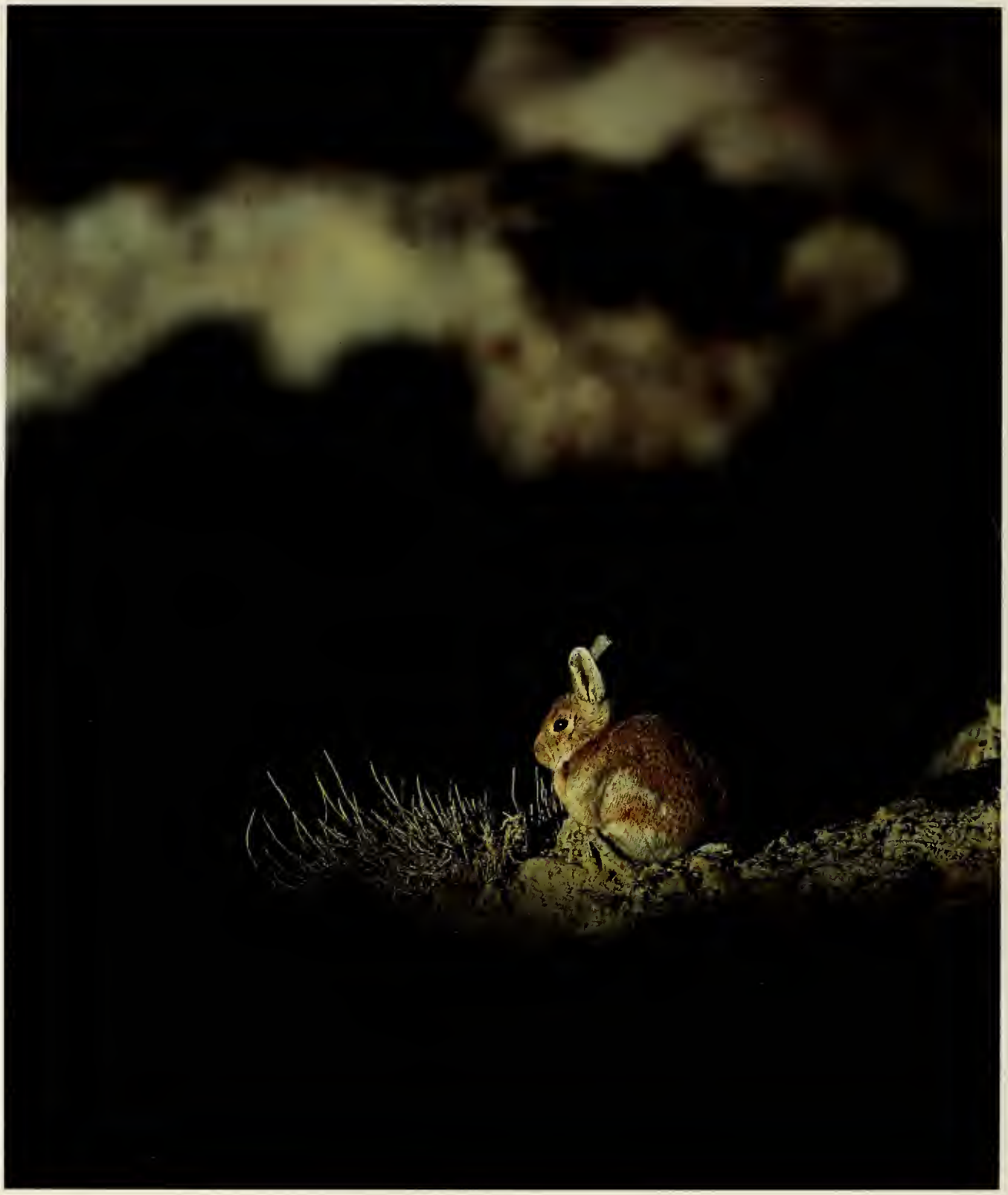
EARED GREBE ON NEST

KRISTI DUBOIS

A river is never quite silent; it can never, of its very nature, be quite still; it is never quite the same from one day to the next. It has its own life and its own beauty, and the creatures it nourishes are alive and beautiful also. **—Roderick Haig-Brown, A River Never Sleeps**

Missouri River above Fort Benton

JOHN LAMBING



MOUNTAIN COTTONTAIL

L. PAUL JONES

COYOTE

JIM MEPHAM

MOUNTAIN GOATS

JIM MEPHAM

BLACK BEAR WITH CUBS

DONALD M. JONES

RING-NECKED PHEASANT

PATRICK TOALSON

RUFFED GROUSE DOUBLE

MIKE LOGAN

Can memories be measured by gold? If so, then I am rich indeed. Who can value in gold the worth of the memory of that first grouse, of that first double, or of the day when five grouse got up from a brush pile, one after another while I, armed with a pump gun, missed them all. There are thousands of memory bonds stored in the safe-deposit box of my memory, and each has its coupon of happiness and health attached. **—Burton Spiller, Drummer in the Woods**

MULE DEER

MICHAEL J. BARLOW

Elk

PETE & ALICE
BENGEYFIELD

Moose

ED & BOBBIE TAYLOR

Brook trout

AL TROTH

WILD AND SCENIC MISSOURI RIVER

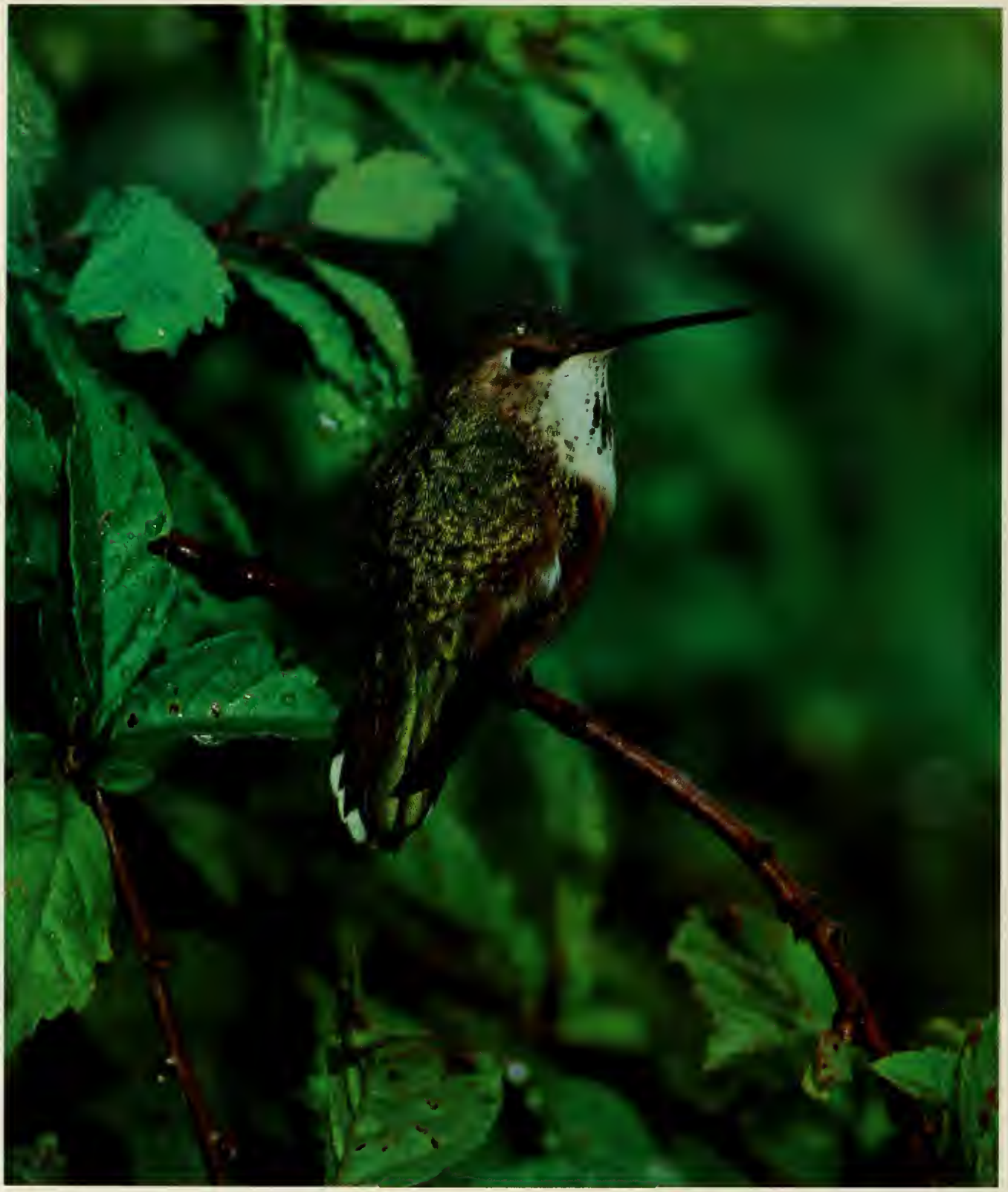
PHIL FARNES

I fish not because I regard fishing as being so terribly important, but because I suspect that so many of the other concerns of men are equally unimportant — and not nearly as much fun.

—Robert Traver, Anatomy of a Fisherman

HAPPY ANGLER

JAN L. WASSINK



FEMALE RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD

AL TROTH

PENSTEMONS

JIM OLTERSDORF

GREAT HORNED OWL WITH SQUIRREL

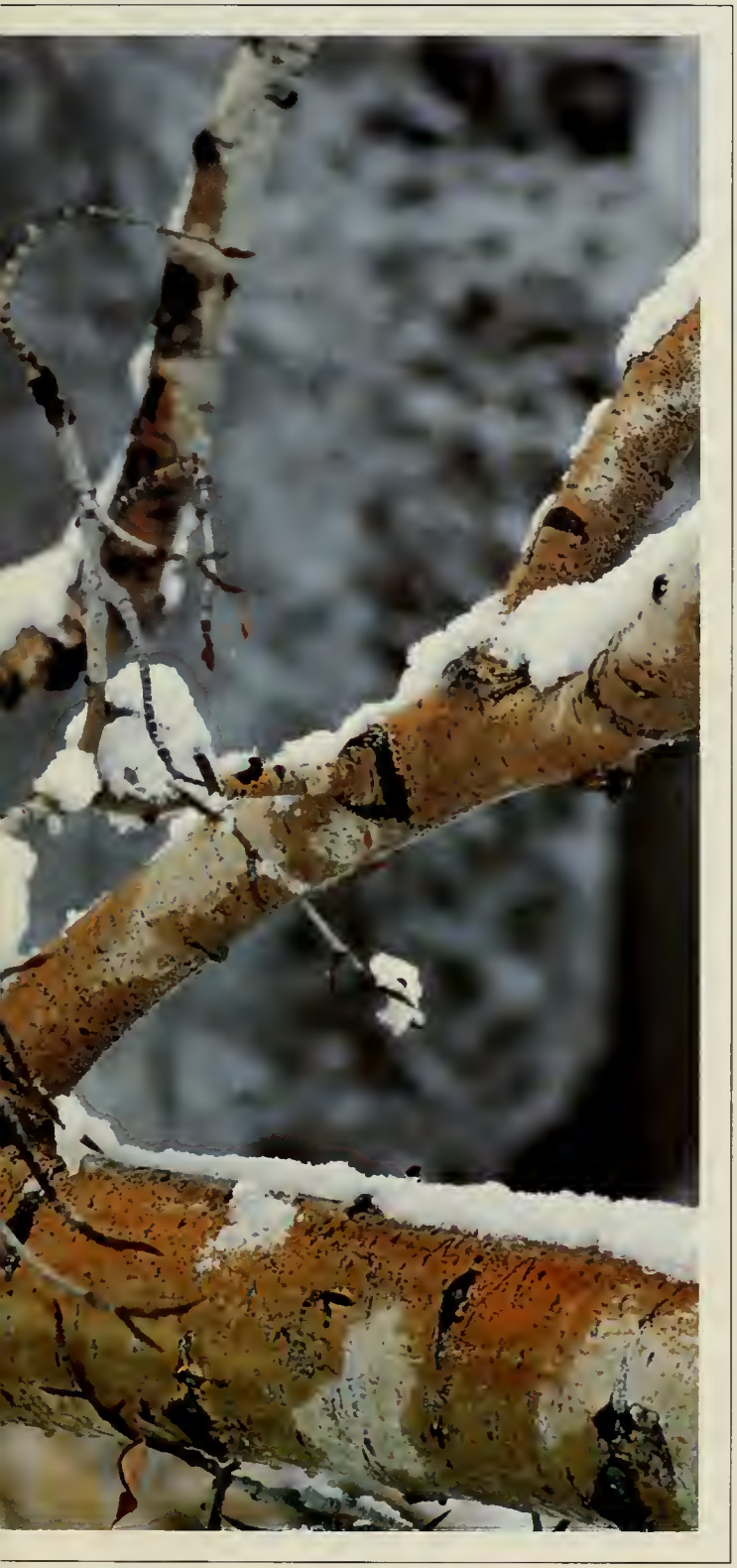
ALAN G. NELSON

COMMON FLICKER

RODNEY SCHLECHT

MOUNTAIN LION KITTEN

DENVER A. BRYAN



Those who go into the wilderness for their pleasure are philosophers and dreamers and they may travel far for the enjoyment that only the wild can give. They do not come entirely for the fishing or the game or even for scenery, though all these may be important. What they come for most is atmosphere and the feeling that here things have not changed, that here is the charm of the old and primitive.

—Sigurd F. Olson

FERRUGINOUS HAWK

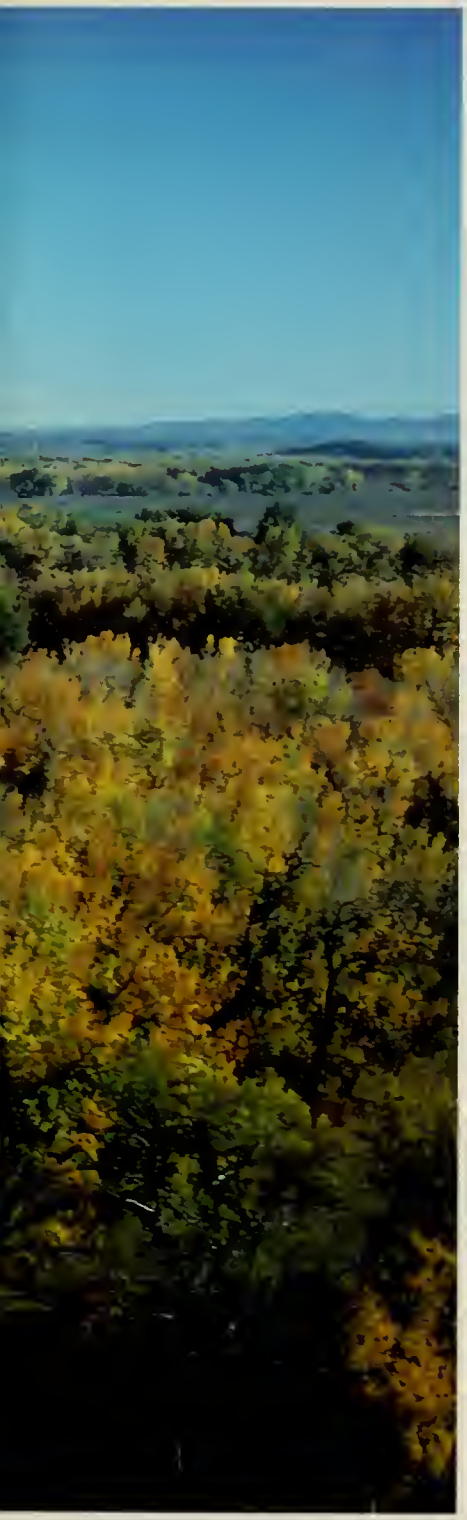
JAN L. WASSINK

MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS

DAN & CINDY HARTMAN

Tongue River south of Ashland

KRISTI DUBOIS



ANTELOPE

MICHAEL & PATSY FRIBLEY

For a breath, in the small sounds of shoes crunching on shale and the snapping of grasshoppers, in the smell of river mud and ripe grass and sagebrush, I am back in the Montana of my childhood, with real earth under my feet and real sky over my head. If anything in our experience has permanence, it is the prairie, with its pale turn of seasons, the quiet cycle of the grasses, the shadows of the sky.... **—Mary Clearman Blew, Montana Spaces**

WHITETAIL BUCK

DONALD M. JONES

SHORT-TAIL WEASEL

JAN L. WASSINK

STONECROP

JIM MEPHAM

SULFUR BUTTERFLY

AL TROTH

YELLOWSTONE RIVER AND ABSAROKA RANGE
TIM EGAN

As it moves from the mountains to the hills to the plains to the sea, a river sings. It is a siren song, falling softly on the ear and heard gently in the heart of those fortunate few who are attuned to hear it. These are the anglers and to them is given not only the ability to hear the voice of the river in their hearts but knowledge of the tongues with which it speaks....There are many who love rivers but do not hear its voice, but anglers have it always in their soul; it is for them the river sings, for them it is never silent.

—Charles R. Brooks, The Living River

Bison

SCOTT & CAROL DAVIS